

**FAVERSHAM CREEK TRUST**  
**Annual General Meeting reporting on the year**  
**1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> December 2023**  
**held at 19.30 on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024**  
**at the Alexander Centre, Faversham**

**Minutes**

<b>Director/Trustees</b>	Philippa Dickenson (Chair), Sue Akhurst, Kristyna Hill, Eldon Hinchliffe, Griselda Mussett, Rev Andrew Sweeney, Liz Tootell, Joanna Wood, Orville Wright
<b>Present</b>	7 Directors of the FCT Board and 42 Members
<b>Apologies for absence</b>	22 apologies

The meeting began at 7.35 pm.

<b>1</b>	<p><b>CHAIR'S WELCOME</b></p> <p>Rev Andrew Sweeney formally opened the meeting and introduced the new Chair, Philippa Dickenson who took up the role in June 2022 following the retirement of Acting Chair, James Rubinstein. The Chair welcomed Faversham's former Member of Parliament, Helen Whately, several Town and County Councillors, Lord Palmer and the attending members to the Annual General Meeting for the year ending December 2023. The Board changed its financial year end in 2022 and is consequently reporting on an 18-month period from July 2022 to December 2023. In future years the reporting period will be January to December.</p> <p>The Chair noted the recent loss of two former trustees, Bob Telford and Gulliver Immink who passed away in the Spring of this year. These losses follow the deaths in 2022 and 2023 respectively of retired trustees Simon Foster and Roger Ely.</p> <p>The Chair explained that she would outline the work the Board has completed over the last 18 months, then break for the formal business of the AGM before concluding by looking at future objectives and plans. A series of slides provided detail.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR</b></p> <p>The Chair opened by thanking the volunteers who contributed to the Trust during 2022-2023. In particular, Kathy West, Liz Jeffrey and Lois Mayland of the Faversham Safari which raised over £1,000 for FCT in 2023. The Trust looks forward to working closely with them for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Safari in 2024. Fiona Crossfield, who sadly died early in 2024 was commemorated for her long-standing contribution to the Trust's regular Plant Sale. New volunteers – Christine Chaffin, Laura Hodgkins and Libby Owen who started in 2023 were also recognised. Ann Hill, now retired as a Trustee, continues to serve as Membership Secretary and is thanked for her continuing work and support. The group of Building volunteers, which re-formed in 2023, most of whom are depicted in the fabulous photo on the front of the AGM booklet, were thanked for their progress in refreshing the internal common parts of the Purifier Building.</p>

	<p>The change of ownership of the site from Morrisons to T J Morris (which trades as Home Bargains) has been smooth with confirmation of the Trust’s lease to 2046. TJ Morris’s contractors have encountered unexpected problems with the building’s structure requiring more extensive works which are likely to continue until September. The current indication is that Home Bargains will open in November 2024.</p> <p>At the end of 2021, the Board of the Trust made the significant decision to invite new trustees onto the Board to secure the continuity of the organisation. Six new trustees joined during 2022 – 2023 leading to an in-depth review of the Trust’s charitable objects (its Purpose), its governance and financial &amp; back-office systems. This work has taken many months and was just starting to bear fruit in Summer 2023 with the increase in volunteers, the start of some new initiatives to support delivery of the Trust’s purpose and the first-ever survey of its Members. Throughout this 18-month period, the Trust has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to support Cinque Ports Rowing with a regular grant and business advice to help Alan Thorne expand his organisation. The Board is keen to develop the relationship through continued financial support and joint endeavours, as they arise.</li> <li>• Started research, with Colin Frake, into securing the future of his block-making business in Faversham</li> <li>• Begun investigations with shipwright Morgan Lewis into funding opportunities for the restoration of the bawley, <i>Thistle</i></li> <li>• Got directly involved with the re-formed Faversham Creek Navigation Company to prepare to re-start dredging in 2024-5. In Summer 2023, Eric Green, Brain Pain and Bob Telford retired as directors. They were replaced by Philippa Dickenson, David Pollock, Alan Thorne and Wink (Barry) Walpole. Colin Frake continues as a director.</li> <li>• Continued to support FavWat with its water quality testing programme</li> <li>• Continued to influence and support efforts to shift the deadlock surrounding the replacement of the defunct Creek Bridge, working with Kent County Council, the Town Council and the Faversham Society through the Bridge Steering Group chaired by the Rt. Hon Helen Whately, MP.</li> <li>• Restarted the newsletter</li> <li>• Refreshed and upgraded the Purifier Building’s safety systems (electrics, fire assessments etc).</li> </ul> <p>The Chair handed over to the Treasurer, Kristyna Hill, for a summary of the Trust’s finances for the reporting period.</p>
3	<p><b>TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 DECEMBER 2023</b></p> <p>Kristyna noted that the Trust’s annual turnover is too small to warrant independent examination of its Accounts, thereby saving the Trust time and fees. As a qualified accountant, she is also able to prepare and submit the accounts on behalf of the Trust.</p> <p>She explained the accounts as they are shown in the AGM booklet. The Trust’s income for the 18-month period was just under £22,000 and made a small operating surplus of just under £3,000. 7% of the Trust’s income came from interest on a legacy which is held in restricted reserves. Income from the rental of the Purifier Building held level, as did income from membership. Donations reduced from 23% to 13% of income compared to 2021-22. The proportion of income from Events also dropped from 15% to 11%.</p>

	<p>Expenditure for the 18-month period was £19,015, with an increase in building costs related to the refurbishment, electrical safety survey and upgrades to the meters, cabling and lighting. Utilities costs also increased from 6% to 10% of expenditure as energy costs went up.</p> <p>Of the £6,855 of monies in Grants and Donations, 98% was made to Cinque Ports Rowing to support their operation.</p> <p>The Trust's balance sheet remains healthy with net assets of £111,123. Of these assets, £42,284 are held in restricted funds to be used to progress our aim of regenerating the basin and the Creek. Unrestricted funds amount to £68,839 which can be used by the Trust at its discretion in the service of all of its charitable objects. £10,000 of the latter funds is held in a reserve account as a provision against unplanned significant expenditure. Fund balances reduced by just under £4,000 from the start to the end of the financial period due to the use of reserves to support grants to CPR.</p> <p>At the end of 2023, the Trust had 242 paid Members. Membership subscriptions and donations amounted to nearly £4,000. The Treasurer thanked the Membership for their continued support of the Trust.</p> <p>There were no questions or corrections arising from the Accounts. Approval of the Accounts was proposed by Eldon Hinchliffe, seconded by Joanna Wood with no votes against, and no abstentions. The Treasurer was thanked for her professional and easy to understand presentation.</p>
4	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING TO BE AGREED AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>The previous Meeting was held on Wednesday, 16th November 2022. The motion to accept the minutes of that meeting was proposed by Joanna Wood and seconded by Debbie Lawther without objections or abstentions, and the minutes were accepted unanimously. There were no corrections or matters arising.</p>
5	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Sue Akhurst, Philippa Dickenson, Griselda Mussett, Rev. Andrew Sweeney, Liz Tootell, Joanna Wood and Orville Wright remain as Trustees/Directors</li> <li>b) Resolution to re-appoint the following Trustee/Director retiring by rotation: Eldon Hinchliffe - proposed by Sue Akhurst, seconded by Debbie Lawther, no objections or abstentions, carried unanimously</li> <li>c) Resolution to ratify the appointment of Kristyna Hill as Trustee/Director – proposed by James Rubinstein, seconded by Joanna Wood, no objections or abstentions, carried unanimously</li> <li>d) Resolution to consider any nominations to appoint Trustees/Directors proposed by Voting Members – no nominations were received</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>TO CONSIDER ANY PROPOSED WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS FROM VOTING MEMBERS</b></p> <p>None received.</p>

## FUTURE PLANS

The Chair presented the results of the online Members' Survey issued early in 2024 and the consequent plans for future events and programmes of activity and investment that the Board is currently exploring.

The Members' Survey, to which 31% of members responded (76 responses) gave overwhelming support for continuing to receive a newsletter with over 90% happy to receive this by email. The Trust will continue to print and distribute hard copies to those who prefer this.

The survey confirmed that members are interested in events in the priority listed on the slide, as follows:

1. Nautical Festival (2025, dependent on dredging of the Creek) – 88%
2. Open Faversham at the Purifier Building (now 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2024) – 55%
3. Members' talks – 50%
4. Boat trips down the Creek – 46%
5. Creek-side litter pick – 41%
6. Tour of Iron Wharf (new proposition to be explored) 38%
7. Guided Creek walks – 38%
8. Transport Festival (with display of Ottor) – 30%
9. Faversham Safari (stalls at the Purifier Building) – 30%
10. Plant sale – 23%
11. Members' only social – 16%
12. Wine tasting – 15%
13. Creek-side family activity – 11%

Respondents also said they wanted the Trust to improve by:

- **Communicating with its Members more** regularly about its progress
- **Raising its profile**, e.g., having a stall in the Market with fliers and recruitment info
- Reaching a much **wider and younger audience**, particularly making the work of the Trust understandable to younger people and those without prior knowledge
- **Collaborating with other groups** to widen the understanding and appeal of the Trust:
  - Work relating to the environment and ecology, e.g., wildlife, water quality
  - Understanding Faversham's maritime heritage and the benefits it can bring to the local economy and the environment
  - Historical information – e.g., a publication about the history of the Creek
  - Events for younger people/families

The feedback led the Board to take a fresh look at its charitable purpose (officially known as Charitable Objects) to establish that it is committing its time, attention and investments appropriately. This review led to a re-statement of the Trust's Objects as follows: *For the benefit of the public*

1. To secure the regeneration and use of the historic Faversham Creek and basin as a maritime waterway.
2. To promote the preservation of buildings and sites of historic or architectural importance along the Faversham Creek waterfront.

3. To support education, training and work experience including traditional boat-building and repair.
4. To support the provision of boat-building, boat repair and leisure facilities on or near the Creek.
5. To promote the protection and conservation of the environment of the Creek.
6. To advance education about Faversham Creek maritime history, heritage and boatbuilding tradition through talks, presentations and study events.

The Board subsequently mapped out the list of possible events and programmes against the Trust's Objects to ensure compatibility and to determine its focus and grant-giving activity through 2024-2025:

Charitable area	Events	FCT Focus & Areas of Activity
<b>1. Active Creek &amp; Basin</b>	CREEK BOAT TRIPS	Bridge & basin: FTC/KCC/DFT/FTC/FS Dredging: FCNC CPR
<b>2. Historic buildings &amp; sites</b>	OPEN FAVERSHAM @ PB ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS? (KAS/LEES COURT ESTATE)	Neighbourhood Plan TS Hazard Swan Quay? Ordnance Wharf?
<b>3. Maritime trades: training &amp; experience</b>		Apprenticeships/bursaries Restoration <i>Thistle</i> ?
<b>4. Facilities: boat build &amp; leisure</b>	NAUTICAL FESTIVAL 2025	Future of block-making (Colin) Community boat-build/mezzanine?
<b>5. Protect &amp; conserve environment</b>	CREEK-SIDE LITTER PICKS	<u>Favwat</u> – support Cleve Hill – support Faversham Society
<b>6. Education about heritage</b>	MEMBERS' TALKS CREEK WALKS TOUR IRON WHARF SCHOOLS PROGRAMME	

The Chair described the Trust's activities to end June 2024 in support of its six charitable areas:

1. The Board committed to continue supporting CPR financially, having granted £10,000 in the first half of 2024, of which a large part helped CPR fund the purchase and installation of some of the pontoons used to store the skiffs off the water. The first step to re-starting dredging, targeted for Autumn/Winter 2024 is to secure a suitable vessel.
2. The Trust supports the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, soon to go to referendum and has supported the Town Council in taking ownership of T.S. Hazard. Swan Quay and Ordnance Wharf are in private ownership but the Board monitors planning applications in respect of these sites, having objected strongly to the most recent application for Ordnance Wharf.
3. Very preliminary discussions have begun with Alan Staley and the Pioneer Sailing Trust about its marine apprenticeship programme.
4. The Board, with Lib Owen's support, will continue to work with Colin Frake to work out a long-term future for block-making in Faversham.
5. Continued support to FavWat with financial support for its testing kits.
6. Members' talks are planned to re-start in Autumn 2024. The idea of guided and self-guided Creek Walks will be explored into 2025 and the possibility of a guided tour of Iron Wharf is to be investigated.
7. The Trust hopes to re-start its Schools' programme of talks about Ottor next year

providing a new programme leader can be found to take over Gulliver Immink's role.

As part of making this programme happen, the Board is activity building connections to other organisations locally, regionally and nationally that can help, advise and support the Trust to realise its aims.

The Chair then handed over to the Treasurer to give a summary of the budget for the current financial year. Kristyna stated that the overall aim is breakeven at an operating level, such that expenditure would be matched by income from membership, donations and use of the Purifier Building. Current grant giving, sourced from reserves, is still limited to Cinque Ports Rowing, to whom the Trust has increased its grant to £13,000 for the whole of 2024. Kristyna noted that future grant-giving will cover a wider range of areas of the Trust's purpose.

A summary of the Trust's plans for the second half of 2024 is as follows:

**Get events set up and running – through 2024 and 2025**

- 🔴 Working with volunteers to get our programme going

**Raise our profile**

- 🔴 Working with Kathy West (Safari) to co-ordinate our events
- 🔴 Recruit a communications co-ordinator
- 🔴 Strengthen links with local, regional & national organisations

**Maintain fiscal prudence while upping our fundraising:**

- 🔴 Reach breakeven each year on operations
- 🔴 Support Safari and business sponsorship programme
- 🔴 Use online media more to make joining & donating easier

**Use our reserves purposefully:**

- 🔴 Grant-giving/funding plan – CPR, dredging, apprenticeship(s), improving/expanding use of the Purifier Building

The Chair made her final points about the bridge and regeneration of the Creek basin. The arbitration route, recently publicised in the Faversham Eye and proposed by Kent County Council with the support of the Trust, the Faversham Society and the Town Council, is likely to be delayed by the forthcoming general election while new ministers settle into their posts and new relationships are built. Even if this route were to prove successful, there is still the need for a suitable body to be established to manage the navigation as well as additional funding to be raised. Rather than wait for arbitration to be determined, the Chair proposed that this process be accelerated by starting now to investigate the basis for a suitable navigation & conservancy body and develop a strategy to raise the funds in full, possibly a sum of up to £8 million (guesstimated). The Board of the Trust will work through 2024 and 2025 to develop and agree a business case in collaboration with relevant local groups.

Separately, there have been recent calls to develop the basin into a marina-style facility independent of the replacement of the bridge. The Board is working with the architect acting for John Cleaver (of BMM Weston) to see how it might support Mr Cleaver's proposal for reinstatement of the north wharf and development of BMM Weston's car park as an integral part of redevelopment of the basin.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Rev'd Andrew Sweeney invited questions from the members.

Mike Palmer queried whether the Trust was aiming to do too much and suggested a focus on the Trust's first two charitable objects. Margaret Law, resident of Faversham for 44 years, understood the suggested focus but offered the counter argument that pursuing Objects 3 – 6 would carry the Town in support, which is crucial in the long-run. The Chair responded by agreeing that although it is a big agenda, the Board will prioritise to take on only an amount that the Board and its volunteer base can handle. Sue Akhurst asked any volunteers to give their names to her or any other trustees. Liz Jeffery noted how exciting it was to hear so many ideas, and that these stimulated further thinking.

Dave Payne commented how glad he was to hear that apprenticeships were to be actioned. He reminded everyone that these were at the heart of the organisation some time ago when the Trust was formed.


Helen Whately, former MP for Faversham, thanked the Chair and noted the reach of the Bridge Steering Group, including Antony Hook and others. She looked forward to discovering what kind of entity could take on the management of the Creek and basin, noting that Kent County Council are not keen to have this responsibility or expenditure. Peel Ports would also have an interest in what type of body would take over their responsibilities.

Councillor Antony Hook thanked the Board, hoping that FCT could move forward quickly despite the election. He suggested there could be a decision as soon as next month on the next step, leading either to arbitration or action by the Department of Transport (DfT). He also pointed out the DfT have refused to reply to a Freedom of Information request and seem unwilling to move on this. Antony will continue to push the relevant parties involved over the next few months, particularly KCC.

Lord Palmer added that he has been pursuing this case and submitted a written question and two oral questions in the House of Lords without satisfactory answers. The DfT has backtracked but he has not given up on them having a role. The more recent Maritime Minister, Lord Gower, had not replied to his request. It may be difficult to get a relationship with new people following the election but he will continue to champion the cause. He pointed out that the DfT do have a role and Peel Ports is getting too easy a ride.

Frances Beaumont added how grateful Save Ham Farm Trust is for the support they have received from the Creek Trust with regard to the proposed development. (The following day the Ham Farm development application for 250 homes was refused).

Roger Josty pointed out that some of the many ideas will need more work, for example tours of Iron Wharf will need several logistical issues to be dealt with before the public could visit. And sorry to say "mud-larking" is not possible and can be dangerous, so more thought necessary on some plans. Keep out of the mud! The Chair responded that the Trust will look properly into what are suggestions at this time, not fully worked-up

	<p>ideas, and will take advice from relevant partners, for example Kent Archaeological Society and other local representatives.</p> <p>Alan Thorne, director of Cinque Ports Rowing and Community Boat Building said that Faversham Creek Trust had provided a very good presentation of their plans. He thanked FCT for its financial support and shared vision and said their suggestions were exciting. The Creek could be the lifeblood of Faversham for which we wish to promote regeneration of the Creek and welcome visitors. CPR events have promoted regeneration and interest and the last year for CPR has been amazing - we are very excited for what is to come. He noted Paul Wilkinson's book about Faversham 1580-1780 showing how important its port activity was over two hundred years of its history. Water quality has deteriorated dramatically, water companies and live aboard vessels contribute to this and are important to monitor. It would be good to seek partners locally such as Shepherd Neame, T J Morris and the Kentish Sailing Association to inform our actions. Last year was absolutely amazing and thanks to all who have contributed.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
10	<p><b>END OF MEETING</b></p> <p>Andrew Sweeney thanked participants for attending the Meeting. The meeting closed at 20.50</p>
	<p>Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:</p> <p></p> <p>Philippa Dickenson, Chair</p> <p>Date: 8 July 2024</p>